

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

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Letters Policy

The Catholic Courier wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome original, signed letters about current issues affecting church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the letter writers' opinions.

Letters must not exceed 500 words. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters for legal and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

Mail letters to: Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.

SSJ inspired her students with dignity

To the editors:

Sister Mary Lourdes...A Woman for All Seasons.

Andy Rooney of "60 minutes" fame several years ago wrote that one of the difficulties of getting older is "that your life is full of holes that formerly were filled by your friends who are now deceased." As of July 2nd, all of those many friends of Sister Mary Lourdes have a huge unfillable hole left by the loss of this rather unique woman. (*Catholic Courier*, July 18: "Sister MacCarthy; longtime theology professor")

Sister lived almost all of this 20th century and has been a Sister of St. Joseph for 71 of those years. Professionally, she was a theologian, a teacher and a spiritual advisor. To put it succinctly, she was the best at all of the endeavors while at the same time she was very humble. She touched the lives of thousands of people and always had a lasting effect.

Sister Mary Lourdes was the best argument for increased involvement of women in the Catholic Church. She never crusaded for this but her life spoke volumes on the subject. This talented woman was sent to study for her doctorate in theology at St. Mary's/Notre Dame in the late 1950's. She was a pioneer for females in the field. She put her knowledge to practical use in the turbulent 1960 & 70's as professor of theology at Nazareth College.



It has been an honor and a privilege to have her friendship for fifty years. In high school, Sister Mary Lourdes taught me theology, American History and Latin. Getting me through Latin III may have been one of her greatest achievements. We worked together on the yearbook in an advisor/editor relationship.

In Sophomore year this innovative nun lectured to us in theology in college style without the aid of a textbook. I have heard her lectures on formation of conscience given by others over the years but not one has improved on these lectures. I can tell you without reservation that Sister Mary Lourdes was the BEST teacher whom I ever encountered. She commanded respect by her dignity; I never heard her raise her voice.

Recently a priest asked me which contemporary theologian I most trusted and

admired. After thinking about it I answered ... Sister Mary Lourdes. Conversations and writings about theologians, including letters in the *Catholic Courier*, seem to be dominated by the terms conservative and liberal. You know, I don't recall Sister ever using those terms.

About (three) months ago I met with this bright, witty and cerebrally-active nun. In her ninetieth year of life she pointed out the nuance in the words singly and singularly. She was a life-long teacher who made students life-long learners. I know that I join thousands of her former students who feel that we have lost a friend, a role model and a gift from the Teacher of teachers. May God grant her the peace and serenity that she brought to others in His name.

Tom Curran
W. Water Street, Elmira

NFP will help couples turn from abortion

To the editors:

The recent discussion concerning abortion and the consistent life ethic has brought forth many possible solutions to ending abortion. Many have been discouraged over the apparent lack of results from activists such as Randall Terry and have proposed to concentrate on all the issues associated with the consistent life ethic.

Most Catholics and even some people who pray in front of abortion clinics fail to realize the powerful effect their presence has on those inside the clinics. Many ex-counselors and operators of such clinics such as Mary Jane Escheveria, who now operates a pro-life pregnancy clinic in Buffalo; state the most disruptive influence on the work inside the clinics is the presence of solitary, often elderly people who speak to no one, only praying the rosary. Such actions would often bring the clients to tears, making them rethink their actions. Clinic employees would

have to reconceive them to have the abortion. Many opt for saving the baby's life. The abortionists themselves would become visibly upset and the abortion itself would be difficult. Such is the power of prayer.

With over 40 million abortions having been performed since 1973, with an estimated 20 million women suffering emotionally from post abortion aftermath, much will have to be done to end this devastating problem. Many letters to the Editor in the August 1 *Courier* mentioned problems such as crime, war and unemployment which they claimed needed to be solved to end abortion but little was stated about the most important factor causing abortion.

It is well known, even by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood, that over 50 (percent) of all abortions are caused by failure of contraception. It is becoming apparent that couples using contraception

are very resistant to unplanned and unwanted children. It is easy to see how such people would choose a short term solution such as abortion to end the problem. Such people, unfortunately, are unaware of the emotional effects of these actions. Among them are suicide, depression and eating disorders.

We must begin to win people's hearts to end abortion. Natural Family Planning must be taught to all pre-cana couples because the method helps couples to become more accepting of children. Priests and religious must learn and preach the benefits of NFP and our teachers must instruct our children on the virtues of abstinence and not safe sex to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

Abortion is a violent struggle between good and evil and our efforts to end it are important. We must, however, never omit God or the power of prayer to make up for our human weaknesses. Much is needed to end abortion but until the practice of Natural Family Planning is adopted by the western world, abortion will never end.

Thank you and God bless.

Michael R. Aiello, M.D.,
President, Catholic Physicians
Guild, Rochester

Parish spirit to live on in heart

To the editors:

Reading about the impending sale of St. Cecilia and St. John Churches in your August 1 issue ("Elmira cluster moves toward sale of two churches"), I was saddened by the apparent finality of their existence. At the same moment I was moved by Father Connor's reassuring words that "Hopefully, we can look into the future and see this as a kind of dying and rising again." I'm sure many parishioners who have moved on from the Elmira area such as myself hold special memories from being involved in either of these churches. It truly feels as if I'm losing a good friend.

St. John's played a significant role in the first half of my life in the formation of my Catholic faith. I never realized how significant that role was until I read the article in the *Courier*. Alas, as the cliché goes, we really don't appreciate something until it is gone. Having recently been ordained a permanent deacon in

June of this year, I continue to reflect upon and thank God for those who enabled me to answer God's call. The parishioners, lay teachers, former pastors and assistant pastors, nuns, choir members, altar servers, Sunday school classmates, et al of St. John's will always occupy a special place in my heart for having done just that. The memories and learnings I have from you will always be the "spiritual roots" from which my faith continues to grow. I thank you.

Yes Father Connor, I for one will experience a sense of dying with the sale of St. John's the building, however, St. John's the Church will continue to live on as a part of me. I pray that what they taught me, I will faithfully pass on to others in the spirit of new life. Peace, good fortune and God's blessings to all of the parishioners of Elmira's Eastside Catholic Parish.

Deacon Tom Schrage
Brockport

Story overlooks Lord's promise

To the editors:

Mass the Thing of the Past? by Rob Cullivan (July 11) — Ann Miller's reply.

Since I deeply believe in my Faith: "I will not leave you orphans." *Trust in Me - Christ - God*.

Since I believe in Jesus Christ always, always up to date; never shall God be dead; Passion of Christ never old-fashioned. I do not agree with the article as written. Nor do I fear that future of our Mass, H. C. God will provide.

Ann F. Miller
Bridge Street, Corning